

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY DACCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 089287

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO COLOMBO, KABUL,  
KATHMANDU, NEW DELHI, MOSCOW FROM HONG KONG MAY 10.

QUOTE HONG KONG 4614.

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, IN, PK, UR

SUBJECT: SUBCONTINENT -- PRC POSTURE AND U. S. POLICY

SUMMARY: THE PRC' S POSTURE TOWARD THE SUBCONTINENT IS  
BASICALLY DEFENSIVE. ITS GOALS ARE ADEQUATELY SECURED BY THE  
STATUS QUO, AND NOT LIKELY TO BE PURSUED THROUGH VIOLENCE.  
THOUGH THE PRC' S BITTER RIVALRY WITH THE USSR WILL CONTINUE  
TO DICTATE A DEGREE OF PARTISANSHIP FOR PAKISTAN AGAINST  
INDIA, THE TREND IS TOWARD NORMAL CORRECT RELATIONS BETWEEN  
PRC AND INDIA AND BANGLADESH. PRC ECONOMIC AID WILL CONTINUE  
TO BE A FUNCTION OF SINO- SOVIET RELATIONS, AND WE SEE NO REAL  
CHANCE OF PRC PARTICIPATION IN MULITLATERAL DEVELOPMENTAL  
ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES. NOR DO WE SEE MUCH REAL LIKELIHOOD OF  
PRC HELP IN KEEPING INDIA FROM DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS,  
THOUGH THE PRC WOULD IN MOST CONTINGENCIES WANT TO DO WHAT IT  
COULD TO HELP AVERT SPECIFIC THREATS TO THE PEACE IN THE SUB-  
CONTINENT. THE U. S., IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, NEED NOT AND  
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SHOULD NOT TRY TO ACCELERATE THE PACE OF SINO- INDIA NORMALIZATION; AND WE SHOULD RIGOROUSLY AVOID, HERE AS ELSEWHERE, INVOLVEMENT IN THE SINO- SOVIET DISPUTE. END SUMMARY.

I. PRC POSTURE

1. STRATEGIC: THE SUBCONTINENT IS AN IMPORTANT ARENA IN THE PRC'S WORLD- WIDE COMPETITION WITH THE SOVIET UNION FOR DIPLOMATIC POSITION AND INFLUENCE. ALSO, IT IS A MAJOR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE OF THE PRC TO KEEP INDIA FROM COOPERATING OR ACQUIESCING IN SOVIET ACTIONS THAT THREATEN CHINA'S BORDERS. CHINA'S FRIENDLINESS TOWARD PAKISTAN AND ANIMOSITY TOWARD INDIA ARE THUS PRIMARILY FUNCTIONS OF RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, THOUGH THERE IS AN UNDERCURRENT OF PRC BITTERNESS TOWARD INDIA IN ITS OWN RIGHT. AT ALL EVENTS, PEKING SEES ITSELF AS POTENTIALLY THREATENED VIA THE SUBCONTINENT. IT DOES NOT SEE THE SUBCONTINENT AS

A GOOD PLACE IN OR FROM WHICH TO ATTACK THE USSR. THE PRC POSTURE IS THEREFORE BASICALLY DEFENSIVE. THE PRC WILL NOT INTERVENE MILITARILY IN THE SUBCONTINENT JUST TO HELP PAKISTAN AGAINST INDIA, OR TO HURT THE SOVIETS; IT WILL INTERVENE MILITARILY ONLY IF THAT SEEMS A NECESSARY AND EFFICIENT WAY OF WARDING OFF AN IMMINENT THREAT TO CHINA'S OWN TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OR SECURITY.

2. ECONOMIC: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE MAY BE USED BY THE PRC TO CONSERVE ITS INVESTMENT IN SINO- PAKISTANI GOODWILL OR TO PROMOTE ITS INFLUENCE ELSEWHERE IN THE AREA; THE ULTIMATE PRC OBJECTIVE WILL NOT BE TO CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUT TO IMPROVE ITS OWN POSITION VIS- A- VIS THAT OF THE SOVIETS, AND FOR THIS REASON IT WILL PREFER TO KEEP ITS AID PROGRAMS BILATERAL. NOTE: THE SINO- SOVIET DISPUTE IS A PRINCIPAL MOTIVATING FACTOR IN CHINESE ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN AND PRESUMABLY IN SOVIET AID TO INDIA. WHATEVER THE INTENT OF THE DONORS, THE AID PRESUMABLY FURTHERS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

3. DIPLOMATIC: PRC DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE WILL BE USED PRIMARILY TO COUNTER SOVIET INFLUENCE OR ( AS APPROPRIATE) INDIAN INFLUENCE, BUT PEKING WILL BE SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO, AND NOT AIM TO UPSET INDIA'S PREDOMINANT POWER OR THE SUBCONTINENT. THE PRC WILL MOVE GRADUALLY TO DEVELOP RELATIONS  
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WITH BANGLADESH, AND TO MEND RELATIONS WITH INDIA, BUT NOT SO RAPIDLY AS TO GET OUT OF STEP WITH PAKISTAN. THE PRC POSITION ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS ( I. E., THAT PROLIFERATION IS NOT TO BE AVOIDED EXCEPT BY GENERAL AND COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT) MILITATES AGAINST THE PRC'S USE OF ITS INFLUENCE TO KEEP INDIA FROM GOING NUCLEAR; HOWEVER, IF THERE WERE

INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES FOR A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE IN THE REGION, PEKING COULD LEND ITS ENDORSEMENT ( AS IT HAS, FOR EXAMPLE TO THE LATIN AMERICAN NFZ). IF AN OCCASION AROSE WHERE THE PRC, BY THE JUDICIOUS EXERCISE OF DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE, OR BY OTHER LOW- COST MEANS, COULD HELP AVERT A SPECIFIC THREAT TO THE PEACE IN THE SUBCONTINENT, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE INCLINED TO DO SO.

## II. - U. S. P O L I C Y

### 4. S T R A T E G I C:

( A ) THE ABOVE OUTLOOK IS NOT SO UNSATISFACTORY FROM THE U. S. STANDPOINT AS TO WARRANT HIGH- COST, HIGH- RISK EFFORTS TO CHANGE IT. THE SLOW PACE OF IMPROVEMENT IN SINO- INDIAN RELATIONS IS REGRETTABLE BUT DOES NOT SEEM DANGEROUS OF ITSELF, ESPECIALLY SINCE PEKING AND NEW DELHI NOW BOTH SEEM DESIROUS OF QUICKENING THE PACE. ALTHOUGH THE " CHINESE THREAT" MIGHT BE USED BY INDIA AS A PART OF ITS RATIONALE ( OR PRETEXT) FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM, AND THERE MIGHT BE SOME OTHER UNDESIRABLE OR UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF SINO- INDIAN TENSION, THERE ARE NO EASY WAYS FOR THE U. S. TO ACCELERATE THE REDUCTION OF TENSION.

( B ) AN IDEAL, BUT NOT VERY PRACTICAL FORMULA FOR LASTING IMPROVEMENT IN CHINESE ATTITUDES TOWARD INDIA WOULD BE CONFIDENCE IN PEKING THAT INDIA WILL NOT ( PARTICULARLY IN COLLUSION WITH THE SOVIETS) POSE A THREAT TO CHINA' S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY THROUGH " INDIRECT AGGRESSION" IN TIBET OR OTHER BORDER AREAS. THE U. S. COULD, IF IT WISHED, SEEK TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH CONFIDENCE IN PEKING, BUT ONLY AT WHAT SEEMS TO US HERE INORDINATE COST. OUR INTERESTS WOULD BE HURT IF IT SHOULD SEEM TO THE SOVIETS THAT WE WERE ALIGNING OURSELVES WITH CHINA OR OFFERING TO " PROTECT" CHINA AGAINST THEM. IT WOULD ALSO BE RISKY FOR US TO APPEAR TO PEKING TO BE GUARANTEEING GOOD BEHAVIOR ON THE PART OF THE INDIANS OR OF POTENTIAL

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DISSIDENTS IN TIBET AND OTHER BORDER AREAS.

5. E C O N O M I C A S S I S T A N C E: IT IS POSSIBLE TO CONCEIVE OF SCENARIOS IN WHICH THE PRC MIGHT BE IMPELLED TO TAKE PART IN A MULTILATERAL PROGRAM BECAUSE OF RIVALRY WITH THE SOVIETS. FOR INSTANCE, IF THE US AND THE USSR WERE COOPERATING SUCCESSFULLY AND HARMONIOUSLY IN A MULTILATERAL PROGRAM TO AID BOTH PAKISTAN AND INDIA, THE PRC MIGHT CONCEIVABLY JOIN IN TO COMPETE WITH THE SOVIETS FOR OUR FAVOR AND THAT OF PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, THIS RESULT WOULD BE BY NO MEANS CERTAIN, AND WE MIGHT WELL END BY MERELY ALIENATING THE PRC.

6. R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S: IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, FROM

THIS VANTAGE POINT, THE WISEST US COURSE WOULD SEEM: A)  
LET INDIA AND CHINA MOVE AT THEIR OWN SLOW PACE TOWARD BETTER  
RELATIONS; B) CONSERVE OUR DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE FOR SOME OCCASION  
WHEN IT MAY BE AN EFFICIENT MEANS TO A CLEAR- CUT GOAL;  
C) CONDUCT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ( IF ANY) ON ITS OWN MERITS, AND  
NOT AS A PRESUMED MEANS OF AFFECTING THE STRETEGIC BALANCE  
BETWEEN CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION; AND D) RIGOROUSLY AVOID  
INVOLVEMENT, IN THE SUBCONTINENT AS ELSEWHERE, IN THE SINO-  
SOVIET DISPUTE. EVEN IF THE US WISHED ( WHICH IT SHOULD NOT) TO  
MANIPULATE THE SINO- SOVIET RELATIONSHIP FOR SOME REAL OR  
FANCIED ADVANTAGE, THE SUBCONTINENT WOULD NOT BE A GOOD  
PLACE FOR DOING SO.  
OSBORN UNQUOTE ROGERS

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